

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL MUNICH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8938
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUNICH 2500

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE CDU/CSU
"BUNDESTAGSFRAKTION ZIMMERMANN"

1. INTRO AND SUMMARY. AT LUNCHEON MEETING AUGUST 24, DR.
FRIEDRICH ZIMMERMANN, RANKING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF CDU/CSU
"BUNDESTAGSFRAKTION" AND CHAIRMAN OF CSU "LANDESGRUPPE" IN BUNDESTAG
COMMENTED ON WIDE RANGE OF CURRENT FRG POLITICAL ISSUES.
ZIMMERMANN IS CONVINCED THAT SPD/FDP COALITION WILL REMAIN IN
OFFICE UNTIL 1980 BECAUSE FDP HAS NEITHER DESIRE NOR ABILITY
TO ALTER ITS COURSE BEFORE THEN. HE CLAIMED THAT RECENT CSU
POLLING EFFORT IN LOWER SAXONY WAS NOT REPEAT NOT RELATED
TO POSSIBLE NEW CSU FOURTH PARTY EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

2. PROSPECTS OF SPD/FDP COALITION. ZIMMERMANN IS CONVINCED
THAT PRESENT SPD/FDP COALITION WILL LAST THROUGH PRESENT
BUDNESTAG'S FULL FOUR-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE. FDP CHAIRMAN
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GENSCHER COULD NOT REPEAT NOT, IN ZIMMERMAN'S VIEW, REVERSE
FDP'S COMMITMENT TO PRESENT COALITION EVEN IF HE WANTED TO.
ON OTHER HAND, ZIMMERMANN BELIEVES THAT IN 1980 FDP MIGHT WELL
REVERSE ITS PRESENT PRACTICE OF STATING ITS PREFERENCE REGARDING
COALITION PARTNER(S) IN ADVANCE OF BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS.
ZIMMERMANN ALSO CLAIMED THAT FDP IS PRESENTLY RECEIVING
MORE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS THAN ANY OTHER PARTY IN FRG AS

BUSINESS INTEREST TO "TO MAINTAIN FDP'S ABILITY TO BRAKE POSSIBLE "SOCIALIST" EXPERIMENTS OF SPD.

3. CSU AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS. ZIMMERMANN HAS NO DOUBT THAT FRG REPRESENTATIVES TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WILL BE ELECTED VIA "BUNDESLISTEN." THIS MEANS THAT EVERY QUALIFIED VOTER IN FRG WILL RECEIVE SEPARATE CDU AND CSU CANDIDATE LISTS. ZIMMERMANN EXPECTS THAT CSU LIST WILL CONTAIN ONLY BAVARIAN CANDIDATES, WHILE CDU LIST WILL NOT REPEAT NOT INCLUDE ANY BAVARIANS. HE IS CERTAIN THAT FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS WILL HEAD CSU'S "BUNDESLISTE" WHETHER OR NOT HE BECOMES BAVARIAN MINISTER-PRESIDENT. ZIMMERMANN ASSERTED THAT STRAUSS, AS MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF BAVARIA, COULD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH TERMS OF DRAFT BUNDESTAG BILL ON EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, BE ELECTED REPEAT ELECTED TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. IF STRAUSS SHOULD WISH TO REMAIN MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF BAVARIA, HOWEVER, HE WOULD HAVE TO DECLINE TO ACCEPT THIS MANDATE. ZIMMERMANN IS CERTAIN THAT STRAUSS WILL HEAD CSU "BUNDESLISTE" FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS.

4. CSU POLL IN LOWER SAXONY. ZIMMERMANN CONFIRMED THAT THE CSU HAD COMMISSIONED A POLL IN LOWER SAXONY. THIS POLL, WHICH WAS CONDUCTED BY REPUTABLE HAMBURG INSTITUTE, INDICATED THAT STRAUSS HAD MORE ABILITY TO MOTIVATE CONFIRMED CDU VOTERS ("CDU STAMM-WAEHLER") THAN ALBRECHT OR KOHL. POLL SHOWED THAT ALBRECHT ENJOYED GREAT DEGREE OF SYMPATHY AMONG LOWER SAXONY VOTERS,

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WHILE STRAUSS ACHIEVED HIGHER MARKS IN CATEGORIES OF ENERGY, EFFICIENCY AND ABILITY TO GET THINGS DONE. ON OTHER HAND, STRAUSS RANKED JUST BEHIND SPD CHAIRMAN BRANDT AS FRG POLITICAL LEADER MOST LIKELY TO UPSET UNCOMMMITTED VOTERS. ZIMMERMANN FLATLY RULED OUT POSSIBILITY THAT CSU POLL IN LOWER SAXONY REFLECTED POSSIBLE EFFORT BY STRAUSS TO EMBARK ON NEW FOURTH PARTY VENTURE.

5. ZIMMERMAN'S VIEW OF KOHL. ZIMMERMANN VIEWS KOHL AS HAVING BECOME RATHER DISILLUSIONED ABOUT PROSPECT THAT FDP WILL CHANGE COALITION PARTNERS BEFORE 1980. HE CLAIMED THAT HE SAW CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN VIEWS OF KOHL AND CDU LEADERSHIP IN LOWER SAXONY, ESPECIALLY ALBRECHT, ON THIS ISSUE.

6. STRAUSS, GOPPEL AND BAVARIAN MINISTER-PRESIDENCY. ZIMMERMANN DOES NOT EXPECT FURTHER DISPUTES BETWEEN STRAUSS AND INCUMBENT BAVARIAN MINISTER-PRESIDENT GOPPEL ON ISSUE OF TIMING OF STRAUSS' ASSUMPTION OF MINISTER-PRESIDENCY. HE DOES NOT ANTICIPATE FURTHER STRAUSS EFFORTS TO FORCE GOPPEL TO STEP DOWN BEFORE HIS TERM EXPIRES IN FALL OF 1978. ZIMMERMANN NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT STRAUSS IS STILL KEEPING ALL HIS OPTIONS OPEN.

7. COMMENT. ZIMMERMANN IS STRAUSS' CLOSEST ASSOCIATE IN MATTERS PERTAINING TO CSU'S ACTIVITIES IN THE BUNDESTAG. HE PRESUMABLY KNOWS STRAUSS' POSITIONS ON SUCH TOPICS AS PENDING ITEMS OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION, CSU'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CDU/CSU COOPERATION IN BUNDESTAG AND CSU'S VIEWS ON PAN-EUROPEAN QUESTIONS. AS CHAIRMAN OF CSU "LANDESGRUPPE" AND RANKING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF CDU/CSU "BUNDESTAGSFRAKTON," ZIMMERMANN HAS VESTED INTEREST IN ACHIEVING GOOD WORKING RELATIONS WITH KOHL AND CDU. ALTHOUGH HE WAS WILLING TO SHARE SOME OF HIS OWN IMPRESSIONS OF KOHL, ZIMMERMANN CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY REFERENCE TO STRAUSS' VIEW OF KOHL.

GILMORE

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